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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS PUBLISHES FISHERY STATISTICAL SOURCEBOOK

Results of the first complete statistical survey made of the United States and Alaska fishery industry since 1931 have been released by the Fish and Wildlife Service in a 492-page publication, Fishery Statistics of the United States 1950, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay announced today.

Previous complete surveys of the United States fisheries were made only in 1908 and 1931. In recent years canvasses of the fisheries of most sections of the country have been made annually. However, no data on the fisheries of the Mississippi River area have been assembled since 1931, and since 1940 only partial surveys have been made of the fisheries of the Great Lakes, South Atlantic, and Gulf States.

This sourcebook is the latest in a series of annual statistical reports which contain data on the volume of the catch of fishery products and their value, employment in the fisheries, quantity of gear operated, and the number of fishing craft employed in the capture of fishery products. Information on the volume and value of the production of manufactured fishery products and byproducts are also shown.

For the first time since 1945 data on the catch and operating units by counties are shown for the entire Atlantic and Gulf coastal areas, except Maryland. Where available, summary information from 1880--when the first comprehensive statistical survey of the fisheries and fishery industries of the United States was made--to date is included.

Outstanding developments during 1950 were the record landings of tuna and tunalike fishes; the continued high production of mahaden; and the expansion of the shrimp fishery in the Gulf area.

A total of 161,463 fishermen, 11,496 vessels of 5 net tons capacity or greater, and 80,814 boats were employed in the commercial fisheries of the United States and Alaska in 1950. During this year the catch of fishery products in all sections of the United States and Alaska totaled 4,884,909,000 pounds, valued at \$343,876,000 to the fishermen. This was an increase of 2 percent in quantity and 1 percent in value compared with the partially estimated production of 1949. The average price of all fish to the fishermen decreased slightly from 1949 to 1950, although the values were generally variable and the prices of some species increased.

San Pedro, Calif., continued to be the Nation's leading fishing port, both in quantity and value with landings of approximately 940 million pounds, valued at \$43.5 million to the fishermen. Gloucester, Mass., was in second place, with approximately 196 million pounds, followed by San Diego, Calif., with approximately 190 million pounds.

The per capita consumption of fishery products in the United States in 1950 totaled 11.5 pounds, edible weight. During the previous year the per capita consumption was 11.4 pounds. This was considerably above the wartime level of approximately 9 pounds when a large portion of the canned pack was allocated to the Armed Forces and to lend-lease distribution. The 1935-39 average was 11.1 pounds.

Fishery statistics of the United States and Alaska are compiled and published annually to make available information on both the economic and biological aspects of the domestic commercial fisheries.

Data on the economic aspects are necessary to persons engaged in the commercial fishery and to governmental agencies concerned with its regulation and protection. From the biological standpoint, these data are important to sound fishery management in providing detailed information on fluctuations in the commercial catch by species, locality and gear; and on the type of gear and craft operated. They assist conservation agencies in regulating the commercial fisheries so as to produce maximum yields without depletion.

The report for 1950 was prepared and published by the Service's Branch of Commercial Fisheries. The work was directed by A. W. Anderson, chief of the Branch, and C. Eldred Peterson, chief of the Branch's Statistical Section.

Fishery Statistics of the United States 1950, Statistical Digest 27, is available only by purchase from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., at \$2.00 per copy.

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